Roy and Marcia Armes Hope to Mold Engineering Leaders

Leaders aren’t born,” legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said. “They are made.”

And if leadership skills can be taught, perhaps the most appropriate vehicle is a student’s college education, believes Roy Armes, chairman, CEO and president of Cooper Tire and Rubber Company.

“The University of Toledo produces outstanding graduates, including many excellent engineers,” said Mr. Armes. “Helping students develop leadership skills, in addition to their academic skills, is an increasingly important component of education, particularly in today’s globally competitive environment.”

That belief, along with gratitude for his own education, has resulted in a $100,000 gift by Mr. Armes (Eng ’75) and his wife, Marcia, to establish the Engineering Leadership Institute in the College of Engineering at The University of Toledo.

The new Institute will provide opportunities for up to 12 sophomores and juniors in the College of Engineering each semester to hone their leadership abilities. The students, nominated by their departments and selected by a rigorous process including a personal interview with the dean of Engineering, will participate in seminars, team-building exercises and public speaking opportunities, and will attend one or more national conferences in their area of study.

Members of the group will also take part in specially designed interactions with distinguished alumni, industry and governmental leaders who will be selected to serve as Institute mentors and speakers.

In addition, the students will serve as ambassadors for College activities and events, and will receive a special leadership scholarship during their senior year.

Mr. Armes’ own leadership skills have not gone unnoticed by his alma mater. He was humbled by being named Distinguished Alumnus by UT’s College of Engineering in 2008.

“Coming back to be honored as an outstanding alum was beyond my expectations and wildest dreams. Being recognized by the University for a successful career was a great honor,” he said.
“Receiving a wonderful education from UT and the College of Engineering has provided me with many opportunities,” said Mr. Armes. “My wife and I feel we’ve been very fortunate, professionally and personally. We’re pleased to be able to give back to the University, and hope that by creating the Engineering Leadership Institute, we can help others develop the necessary skills to succeed.”

“The motto on our University’s seal,” notes College of Engineering Dean Nagi Naganathan, “refers to UT’s role as the ‘Moulder of the Future.’ Roy Armes, as a successful CEO, leads a company that molds unique products every day to aid the mobility of our society. We are thankful for their generous support and are delighted to be able to partner with Roy and Marcia in our mission to mold the engineering leaders of tomorrow.”